GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:250
ANSWERED ON:20.10.2008
TELEPHONE REVOLUTION IN RURAL AREAS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the revolution in telephones has not reached the rural areas in the country inspite of the vast development in Information Technology Sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the private telephone operators and even BSNL have failed to achieve the target for providing telephone facilities in rural areas in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken/being taken by the Government to take the telephone revolution to the rural areas in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA)

(a) to (d) New Telecom Policy, 1999 (NTP-99) envisaged a target of 4% teledensity in rural areas both in wireline and wireless by the year 2010. As against the teledensity of 0.52% as on 31st March, 1999, the present teledensity has increased manifold and is now 11.18% as on 31st August, 2008.Thus revolution in telephone has reached the rural areas of the country at a much faster rate. To increase the rural penetration, Universal Service Obligation Funds (USOF) are extensively being deployed, as a result, more than 90% villages have already been covered with communication facilities.

(e) Government has taken and is contemplating following action to further intensify the telephone revolution to the rural areas in the country:-

(i) To increase the wireless communication in rural areas, scheme for setting up of 7871 Shareable Infrastructure Sites in 500 districts in 27 States for provision of mobile services in rural and remote areas through subsidy support from USOF (Phase-I) has been launched. Mobile services from these towers are likely to commence in a phased manner.

(ii) Second phase of the Mobile Infrastructure Scheme for setting up 11,000 additional towers to cover the remaining uncovered rural and remote areas is likely to be launched shortly.

(iii) Subsidy support from USOF for provision of Rural Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs).

(iv) Sharing of infrastructure to reduce the capital as well as operation cost.